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## Viewing cable 09QUITO160, ECUADOR'S NEW VISION FOR RELATIONS WITH U.S.

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09QUITO160**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">09QUITO160</a>	<a href="#">2009-03-05 16:19</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Quito</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.eluniverso.com/2011/04/07/1/1355/cable-195473.html>

VZCZCXYZ0003  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0160/01 0641619  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 051619Z MAR 09  
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0140  
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 8020  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 4098  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3442  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAR LIMA 3086  
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 4166  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RHEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC 2271  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000160

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: TWENTY YEARS  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [EINV](#) [PGOV](#) [ETRD](#) [KJUS](#) [EC](#) [IR](#)  
SUBJECT: ECUADOR'S NEW VISION FOR RELATIONS WITH U.S.

REF: QUITO 122 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Hea...

id: 195473  
date: 3/5/2009 16:19  
refid: 09QUITO160  
origin: Embassy Quito  
classification: CONFIDENTIAL  
destination: 09QUITO122  
header:  
VZCZCXYZ0003  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0160/01 0641619  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 051619Z MAR 09  
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0140  
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 8020  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 4098  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3442  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAR LIMA 3086  
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 4166  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RHEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC 2271  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

----- header ends -----

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000160

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: TWENTY YEARS  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [EINV](#) [PGOV](#) [ETRD](#) [KJUS](#) [EC](#) [IR](#)  
SUBJECT: ECUADOR'S NEW VISION FOR RELATIONS WITH U.S.

REF: QUITO 122 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Heather Hodges for reason 1.4 (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a March 4 meeting, MFA U/S Orbe, speaking on instructions from FM Falconi, set the stage for Ecuador's vision for future relations with the U.S. He then called for a meeting between President Obama and President Correa to set a strategic agenda for future cooperation on the basis of mutual interests. The Ambassador reminded him of the harm that GOE expulsions of Embassy personnel had done to the relationship, and protested Minister Carvajal's continuing public rhetoric against one of the expelled officials. She informed Orbe about problems with continuing cooperation in several areas and suggested we move ahead on planning the Manta FOL's withdrawal and future counternarcotics cooperation under the gas-and-go model as next steps in the relationship. Other MFA officials raised the Bilateral Dialogue and a planned protest note on the Serrano case. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The Ambassador met with MFA Under Secretary for Bilateral Affairs Jorge Orbe on March 4 at his request. The new North American Affairs Director General Juan Salazar, Advisor to the Foreign Minister Marco Albuja, and PolCouns also joined the meeting.

MFA REACHING OUT IN ITS OWN WAY

13. (C) In a wide-ranging introduction to the purpose of the meeting, U/S Orbe sought to establish the parameters for future bilateral cooperation by highlighting what he called profound changes in Ecuador under President Correa and the new constitution. He said the Correa administration found weak government institutions when it came into office, so it was strengthening the regulatory, planning and control functions. Orbe stressed that investment must now give priority to development of microenterprises and small and medium companies, rather than to large ones. In that context, he said the GOE provided investment guarantees and recognized the private sector's role; it wished to control only strategic economic sectors and would not repeat the errors of the past in its "21st Century Socialism." Orbe said that to counter crime and narcotics trafficking, the GOE focused not only on security measures, but also addressing the public health impact and border region underdevelopment.

14. (C) Orbe described Ecuadorian foreign policy as seeking good relations with all countries, particularly those in Latin America, but also with developed countries. He stressed that ties (including those with the U.S.) must be developed on the basis of shared interests in strengthening democracy, promoting development, increasing employment, reducing inequality, treating migrants humanely, controlling narcotics trafficking, and fighting trafficking in persons. Orbe cited the will of the Ecuadorian people who voted against pro-FTA candidates, saying that commercial agreements must be concluded on new terms. In an aside on Iran, he claimed that the GOE did not support Iran's nuclear initiatives.

15. (C) Orbe then proposed to the Ambassador that the two governments agree on a strategic agenda for wide-ranging bilateral cooperation and a political dialogue. He suggested that the point of departure for improved relations with the U.S. should be a meeting between our presidents. He noted the efforts of the Ecuadorian Ambassador in Washington to secure a meeting for FM Falconi with the Secretary and one between POTUS and Correa, "if not at the Summit (of the Americas), then before or after." Orbe believed such a dialogue would allow us to reconstruct and revitalize our relationship on new terms.

#### AMBASSADOR LAYS OUT CONTINUING PROBLEMS

16. (C) The Ambassador responded by recalling our long history of good bilateral relations, despite occasional moments of friction, and our many current areas of cooperation. She highlighted the Bilateral Dialogue, which finally kicked off with the participation of various agencies in November 2008, after GOE delay in responding to our proposal. The Ambassador then made clear that events of the last month (reftel) had harmed the perception of Ecuador in the U.S., to an even greater extent than Correa's anti-U.S. rhetoric in the preceding months had. She emphasized that the absence to date of any U.S. reprisal for GOE actions did not mean there would not be one if Washington so decided. The Ambassador stated that she was not sure that Coordinating Minister for Internal and External Security Miguel Carvajal understood what the U.S. needed to continue supporting specialized police units. She protested Carvajal's public comments on March 3, again calling one of the expelled Embassy officers the CIA Chief of Station and alleging that he held the same role in other countries.

17. (C) Orbe rolled his eyes, saying he and Falconi had spoken with Carvajal to remind him that only the President and Foreign Minister should speak on foreign policy matters. He argued that declaring an innocent Ecuadorian diplomat in Washington persona non grata would be unfair. He also continued to maintain that Ecuador was justified in its actions. The Ambassador swiftly retorted that expelling the U.S. Embassy officers was unjustifiable and that PNGing another diplomat in response was diplomatic practice, and therefore one option Washington was considering.

18. (C) The Ambassador lamented the consequences of the GOE's

actions. She pointed out that Ecuadorian police at the moment are reluctant to exchange information with the Drug Enforcement Administration and that the U.S. Southern Command was no longer allowed to put its logo on projects it funds. Orbe acknowledged that government officials at the working level were afraid to cooperate with the U.S., but insisted they should not be. On the logo issue, he had no specific response, but noted that in his previous position at the National Planning Secretariat, he had difficulties with USAID not adhering to the Paris Declaration on development assistance. The problem had only been cleared up to the extent that USAID had said it could not conform and that U.S. aid has proceeded.

#### OUR CALL FOR SMALL STEPS FORWARD

¶9. (C) The Ambassador emphasized that meetings with POTUS were generally preceded by preparations at the working level, and that we might need to start with small steps rather than at the top. She suggested that securing the meetings Orbe sought would be difficult, but assured Orbe she would report his requests to Washington.

¶10. (C) The Ambassador asked if Orbe had any concrete ideas for bilateral cooperation. He reiterated the GOE's desire for a presidential-level meeting. The Ambassador then suggested we should move forward in discussions with the MFA on counter-narcotics cooperation under a gas-and-go model once the Manta Forward Operating Location (FOL) closes. She also informed Orbe that the Embassy would be meeting again with the Defense Ministry to plan the FOL withdrawal. When DG Salazar raised the working groups to prepare for a next Bilateral Dialogue meeting, the Ambassador expressed a willingness to move forward.

#### SERRANO PROTEST

¶11. (C) Advisor Albuja then informed the Ambassador that the MFA would be sending an official note of protest in the case of Nelson Serrano, an Ecuadorian-American found guilty of murder and imprisoned in Florida. The subject of protest was the role of U.S. officials in securing the deportation of Serrano from Ecuador, which Albuja called contrary to the Ecuadorian constitution. The note would include a request for Serrano's return to Ecuador. He said the note would be sent to fulfill the requirements of the Inter-American Court, which had considered the case. Albuja said the GOE was hoping to make a financial settlement with the family. The Ambassador noted that the U.S. was unlikely to extradite Serrano. All nodded as if they fully understood. The Ambassador thanked Albuja for informing her in advance about the note.

#### COMMENT

¶12. (C) We are struck by the MFA's lack of understanding of, or refusal to acknowledge, the depth of damage to the bilateral relationship caused by expelling our employees, based on trumped up sensitivities. Virtually simultaneous to our meeting with U/S Orbe, Foreign Minister Falconi was giving a press conference on the U.S.-Ecuador relationship, calling for a "solid and stable" relationship based on mutual cooperation and respect, blaming the U.S. for unacceptable interference, and expressing hope that things would "not get more complicated." Falconi's comments, while his underlings were giving us their Alice-in-Wonderland version of the future bilateral relationship, is a continuation of the GOE's refusal to engage in real dialogue. The Correa game plan continues to be publicly scoring domestic political points, while "making nice" with us in private.

#### HODGES

=====CABLE ENDS=====